

**Amendments to the Drawings:**

Attached are two replacement sheets of drawings. The sheets, which include Figs. 1-4, replace the original sheets including Figs. 1-4. Figs. 1-4 have been amended to remove shading and to improve legibility. In addition, Fig. 2 has been amended to include previously omitted reference character 21 showing the slot in loop foot region 10a, and to show loop closure element 20. Support for the changes to Fig. 2 is provided in the original specification, for example at paragraph [0031]. No new matter has been added.

Attachment: Two (2) Replacement Sheets

**REMARKS**

Claims 20-40 are pending in the present application. In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) for not showing every feature of the claims and under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(m) for using improper shading. In addition, claims 20-22, 24, 26-28, 30, and 37-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,616,977 to Schramm. Claims 23, 25, 29, and 31-36 were indicated as being drawn to allowable subject matter.

In this response, Applicants have submitted two replacement sheets of drawings including Figs. 1-4. In addition, Applicants have amended claims 20 and 40 and have cancelled claim 31. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 20-27, 29, 30, and 32-40 will be pending.

Reconsideration of the application in view of the amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

**Objection to the Drawings:**

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a) for not showing every feature of the claims and under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(m) for using improper shading. Submitted herewith are two replacement sheets of drawings, which have been amended to remove the shading and to improve their legibility. In addition, Fig. 2 has been amended to include previously omitted reference numeral 21 showing a slot in loop foot region 10a and loop closure element 20 has been added. Support for the amendments to Fig. 1 is found in the original specification, for example, at paragraph [0031]. No new matter has been added. In addition, paragraph [0031] of the specification has been amended to include the reference numbers 20 and 21 so as to be consistent with the changes to Fig. 2. Claim 31 has been cancelled.

Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b):**

Claims 20-22, 24, 26-28, 30, and 37-40 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,616,977 to Schramm.

Schramm describes a helicopter rotor system in which a plurality of rotor blades are attached to the rotor mast.

Applicants have amended independent claim 20 to recite that the blade connector loop encircles the rotor mast in unattached fashion. Support for the amendment is provided in the specification, for example, at paragraph [0013] and in the drawings.

Applicants respectfully submit that Schramm does not describe the feature of a blade connector loop that encircles the rotor mast in unattached fashion. Instead, the blade connector loop in Schramm is described and shown in the drawings as being directly attached to the rotor mast, See, e.g., col. 5, lines 63-65 and Fig. 9.

Claim 40 has been amended to replace the final comma with a period.

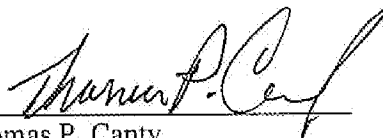
Withdrawal of the rejections to claims 20-22, 24, 26-28, 30, and 37-40 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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